

MARSHLAND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1906.

To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of Marshland.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my second Annual Report on the health and sanitary condition of your District.

The DISTRICT consists of twelve parishes, in the County of Norfolk, lying to the North and North-East of Wisbech, and has an area of 51969 acres. It is divided into the four Sub-Districts of Terrington, Walpole, Emneth, and Upwell, for registration purposes. The configuration of the District is flat—no part being many feet above sea level. The soil is peat and silt on sand and gravel; which in turn rests on boulder clay. The district is essentially rural in character, having a population of one person to every $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The chief occupation is agriculture—a constantly increasing amount of land being devoted to the cultivation of fruit, and, to a less extent, flowers.

The POPULATION, estimated on the Registrar-General's assumption, that the rate of increase or decrease which obtained during the last decennial period still continues, was 11275; made up as follows:—Terrington, 4840; Walpole, 2543; Emneth, 979; and Upwell, 2913.

BIRTHS.—311 births were registered—19 of which were illegitimate, as compared with 303 in 1905. They were distributed as follows:—Terrington, 141; Walpole, 66; Emneth, 32; and Upwell, 72.

The birth-rate was 27·5 per 1000, being 2 per 1000 above the average for the last ten years, and the excess of births over deaths was 175.

DEATHS.—136 deaths were registered as compared with 133 in 1905. They were distributed as follows:—Terrington, 52; Walpole, 27; Emneth 14; and Upwell, 43.

The death-rate was 12 per 1000 living, being 1·9 per 1000 below the average for the last ten years.

INFANT DEATH-RATE.—29 infants under one year of age died, as compared with 25 in 1905, giving a death-rate of 93·2 per 1000 births registered and 2·5 per 1000 living.

The death-rate of illegitimate children under one year of age was 16% of those registered, whereas of legitimate children it was 9%.

AGE MORTALITY.—36 children under 5 years of age died, and 55 old people over 65 years. The corresponding figures in 1905 were 36 and 56.

The DISEASES NOTIFIABLE in the District are:—Small Pox, Cholera, Diphtheria, Membranous Croup, Erysipelas, Scarlet Fever, Typhus Fever, Enteric Fever, Relapsing Fever, Continued Fever, Puerperal Fever, Plague, and Chicken Pox. The number of cases notified during the year was 106 as compared with 166 in 1905. They were distributed as follows:—Terrington, 42; Walpole, 46; Emneth, 4; and Upwell, 14.

SCARLET FEVER.—The epidemic which prevailed during 1904 and 1905, continued during the earlier part of the year, and 42 cases were notified, as against 117 in 1905. They were distributed as follows:—Terrington, 29; Walpole, 9; Emneth, 1; and Upwell 3. Three deaths occurred—2 in Terrington, and 1 in Walpole.

DIPHTHERIA.—25 cases were notified—6 in Terrington, 12 in Walpole, 1 in Emneth, and 6 in Upwell. 2 deaths occurred—1 in Terrington and 1 in Walpole. Most of these cases occurred in West Walton amongst school children, and although the School was closed for a lengthened period, they were meeting each other in their homes—where in most cases no isolation was possible.

ENTERIC FEVER.—4 cases were notified, as compared with 2 in 1905; 1 in Walpole, 1 in Emneth, and 2 in Upwell. 2 deaths occurred—1 in Walpole and 1 in Upwell.

ERYSIPELAS.—8 cases were notified—Terrington, 1; Walpole, 3; Emneth, 1; and Upwell, 3; 11 cases were notified in 1905. No deaths occurred.

CHICKEN POX.—27 cases were notified, as compared with 27 in 1905; 6 occurred in Terrington and 21 in Walpole. No deaths.

MEASLES.—None.

WHOOPING COUGH prevailed in Emneth and Upwell, and 2 deaths took place.

CANCER.—10 deaths took place from this disease, as compared with 9 in 1905.

PHTHISIS or CONSUMPTION was responsible for 4 deaths, as against 6 in 1905.

DIARRHŒA and ENTERITIS caused 4 deaths—3 under one year.

ISOLATION.—Since September, 1906, there has been no isolation accommodation for the district.

DISINFECTION.—The houses of all notified cases were visited by the Inspectors, disinfectants were distributed gratis, and instructions given to prevent the spread of the disease. After recovery, or death, the houses were disinfected under the direction of the Inspectors.

WATER SUPPLY.—A minority of the inhabitants derive their supply from the Wisbech mains, the water of which is derived from the chalk formation; it is of good quality, and is supplied on the constant system. The majority of the people depend on rain-water, collected from the roofs, in water-tight underground cisterns, protected from contamination. This suffices in average seasons; but during dry seasons many are compelled to supplement this source of supply, by obtaining water from the open drains—which contain much decomposing vegetable matter.

SEWERAGE.—There is no system of sewage disposal, the houses being drained to cesspools. The excrement disposal is by means of deep covered privies. There is no public scavenging.

The DISTRICT has been systematically inspected by the Inspectors and myself; and where any nuisance was reported, or infectious disease notified, special visits were made. As a result of this inspection, many nuisances were abated without formal notice being served.

CERTIFICATES were granted for the occupation of 22 new houses.

ORDERS were made for the construction of 26 new privies, 9 cesspools, and 5 cisterns.

The DAIRIES and COW SHEDS, SLAUGHTER HOUSES, and KNACKERS' YARDS in the District have been inspected, and found in a satisfactory condition.

The FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT, 1901.—This Act requires me to report on the administration of the Act in “Workshops” and “Workplaces,” and send a copy of this Report to the Secretary of State. In the Marshland District the chief industry is agriculture, and in the neighbouring towns it is chiefly connected with the wholesale timber trade and agricultural implement making. These industries do not put out home work. The only Workshops and Workplaces are the village bakehouses, carpenters' and blacksmiths' shops, all of which have been visited and found in a fairly good sanitary condition.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. L. FORREST,

Medical Officer of Health.



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